

Characterization of European Management Perspective Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Because Europe is characterized by the coexistence of several cultures whose characteristics have both similarities and differences but appreciable, the results of researchers in this regard are different from each other, this distinction is often made based on the prevailing values of that culture, which determines the orientation of the country for a certain system, management style or to a specific profile manager. A particularly important role in characterizing cultural factors play European management, each differing from the other culture as module in addressing various fundamental issues that characterize that society. These issues can be characterized by certain general cultural dimensions that Hofstede defines them as aspects of a culture that can be measured in relation to other cultures. The differences between management systems in European countries (mainly EU countries) in the context of this article, the study is based on four cultural dimensions of Hofstede model (power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity) and change scores recorded for these dimensions in each country. Dimensions considered primarily affect organizational culture which in turn significantly influence the development and performance of the organization and its members, management practices and policies. Data from Hofstede's study reinforce and support the claim that European countries can be grouped systematically cultural groups (Nordic countries, Latin, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Eastern Europe) that allow significant interpretation in terms of management organization, and that can speak of a typical single European culture but you can see all dimensions of cultural differences taken into account.

Keywords: European management, organizational culture, the cultural dimension.

1. European Management features

European management, unlike the U.S., is characterized by amplifying the power of managers (prerogatives and power of decision and action managers are heavily influenced by the employees of unions, the general meeting of shareholders and even public authorities) and relationship management with predominantly informal character. Another feature of European management is the social responsibility of European companies, regardless of the activity is an integral part of society. In the European view, profit is one of the major objectives of companies and not reason their existence (H. Bloom et. Alii, 1997, p. 18).

Despite the cultural diversity of European countries can be distinguished, however, certain values can be considered, so to speak, "European", which could form the basis of a European management. Specialists Strumpel and J.J. Van Dijk (cited sandbag, 2006 p. 281) notes that in Europe there is a convergence trend in the values, especially evident in developed countries, manifested primarily through:

- A strong opening to the world of European culture by promoting quality of life and values such as peace, human rights, environmental protection, fight against poverty;
- Promotion and development of democratic political systems, which enable the participation of individuals in all socio-economic life.
- Self-orientation towards global orientation or autoîmplinire self-realization, which becomes a value in itself.

Cultural values shared European space, put their mark on European management model characterized according to a study (conducted in 1992 by the European Roundtable of Industrialists and Group School of Commerce of Lyon) with an obvious bent of the human person, through diversity cultural lesser degree of formality and tend to "harmonize the extremes" by avoiding situations. It is based on values and behaviors specific to the European lifestyle.

2. The importance of cultural dimensions characterize management systems

G. Hofstede, one of the most important representatives of intercultural research, defines culture as "collective mental programming which distinguishes the members of a social group or category of members of other groups or social categories (1996, pp.21-22) and F. Trompenaars, director of the Center for International Business Studies (CIBS) in the Netherlands, sees culture "the way people solve their problems" (Trompenaars, as cited in Popa and Philippe 1999, p.22).

In an attempt to characterize the management system of a country, we must consider the main characteristics of organizational culture: first, an organizational culture requires a range of meanings, values, belief, faith, common members of the organization, on how action and operation thereof, which are influenced by national culture in the country, secondly, values, beliefs and common beliefs are reflected in a specific way of thinking, action and feeling in the organization manifests itself differently from one countries, and thirdly, the forms of manifestation of organizational culture significantly influence the development and performance of the organization and its members and management practices and policies.

A culture is different from the other by addressing different module in the fundamental issues that characterize that society.

These issues can be characterized by certain general cultural dimensions.

With reference to the cultural dimension which Hofstede defines as "an aspect of a culture that can be measured in relation to other cultures" (as cited Bibu, 2000, p.12) we can see that it consists of a set of social phenomena that have been established empirically that are combined in a certain way.

The comparative analysis of cultural dimensions of European countries belonging to the EU, we started from the four cultural dimensions of Hofstede model (power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity), and the scores recorded for each country. They allow a comparative analysis which can reveal and analyze the cultural differences existing in Europe and relevant similarities between the countries belonging to the same group.

Using Table no. 1, we have an overview of how cultural dimensions affect the management, management practices and policies.

The cultural dimension	Effect on management practices and policies	
Distance towards the power	Distance to power low Democratic leadership style, advisory The trend towards decentralization Flattened organizational structures Staff reduced the number Reduced number of intervals salary scale Workers and officials have the same status Employees located on the lower hierarchical levels have a high level of qualification	High Power Distance Authoritarian leadership style The trend towards centralization Organizational structure with many hierarchical levels Staff large Large number of intervals salary scale Officials have a higher status workers Employees located on the lower hierarchical levels are generally low skilled
Individualism / Collectivism	Individualism Personal interests prevail Success is related to individual performance Attachment to the organization is reduced Promote initiatives and innovative ideas Decisions are unitary The main criterion for promotion is performance Application of modern management methods and techniques, participatory	Collectivism Group interests prevail Successes and failures are common components of all employees Attachment to the company employees is high Relations between individuals are based on emotional reasons Decisions are taken according to the employees belonging to a group Promotion based on seniority criterion
Masculinity / Femininity	Masculinity Direct confrontation as a method of conflict resolution Success, competitiveness and performance are core values The focus on performance Motivation action is ambition It is estimated independence You live to work Money and property are important	Femininity Negotiation, the main method of conflict resolution Solidarity and modesty are core values The focus on quality of life Services provide motivating factor Support for the helpless It works to live People and environment are important

The cultural dimension	Effect on management practices and policies	
Uncertainty avoidance	Low uncertainty avoidance Employees prefer large companies Criteria for promotion is seniority Compliance with the hierarchical Conflicts between employees are avoided Aggressive behavior is rejected and is preferred low exteriorization of emotions Tolerance to considerable deviations from standards and rules Organizational environment, the environment, nationalism is characterized by low	High uncertainty avoidance Employees prefer small companies Flexibility and increased mobility of labor policy Employee flexibility is considered a virtue Own and others aggressive behavior is generally accepted and is preferred exteriorization strong emotions. Reduced tolerance towards people who deviate from standards and rules Increasing nationalism in rural organization.

- Adapted from: C.V. Marinas, (2010) and O. Nicolescu (2006)

3. Interpretation made by Hofstede scores for cultural dimensions of European countries in terms of management

3.1. Cultural dimensions scores recorded for European countries

Based on the scores they recorded some countries in the Hofstede cultural dimensions measured, represented in Table 2, we make a comparative analysis of how cultural values affect the management of a country reflected in the attitude of managers, the employees and the management practices and policies.

Table no. 2: The scores recorded by countries and groups of countries on cultural dimensions. Minimum and maximum values

Group of countries	Country	Distance from power DP	Individualism IND	Masculinity MAS	Uncertainty avoidance EI
Latin developed	Belgia	65	75	54	94
	Italia	50	76	79	75
	Spania	57	51	42	86
	Franta,	68	71	43	86
No.1 East European	Polonia	68	60	64	93
	Cehia	57	58	57	74
	Slovacia	104	52	110	51
	Ungaria	46	80	88	82
No. 2 East European	Bulgaria	70	30	40	85
	România	90	30	42	90
German	Austria	11	55	79	70
	Germania	35	67	66	65
Nordic	Danemarca,	18	74	16	23
	Finlanda,	33	63	26	59
	Suedia,	31	71	5	29
	Olanda	38	80	14	53
English	Irlanda	28	70	68	35
	UK	35	89	66	35
Minimum values		Austria 11 Denmark 18 Ireland 28 Sweden 31	Bulgaria 30 Romania 30	Sweden 5 Netherlands 14 Denmark 16 Finland 26	Denmark 23 Sweden 29 Ireland 35
Maximum values		Slovakia 104 Romania 90	Hungary 80 Italy 76 Netherlands 80 UK – 89	Slovakia 110 Hungary 88 Austria 79 Italy 79	Poland 93 Belgium 94 Romania 90

Adapted available on page-http: // www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php

3.2. European countries in terms of size grouping proposed by Hofstede

The values of each of the four dimensions analyzed are valued on a scale from 1 to 100. The interpretation of these dimensions was as follows: between 0-40 - low, between 41-60 - average, over 60 - high level / high.

Although Hofstede never made a thorough analysis in terms of cultural dimensions for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, however, starting to work, the model proposed by Schneider SC and Barsoux JL (cited Mihut I., 2002) which divides European countries in terms of managerial culture in five

representative cultural groups, and the categorization made by Bibu NA (2000) Final Report on the results of EVE, 1995 we selected the following groups for analysis (see Table no. 3):

Table no. 3: Grouping of European countries by levels of cultural dimensions Hofstede

Groups of countries	Distance from Power-DP	Individualism - IND	Masculinity - MAS	Avoid Uncertainty-El
1. Nordic (Danemarca, Finlanda, Suedia, Olanda)	Redusă	Mediu/Mare	Medie/Mare	Redusă/Medie
2 Latin developed (Belgia, Franța, Italia, Spania)	Mare	Mediu/ridicat	Mediu	Ridicat
3. German (Austria, Germania)	Redusă	Mediu/Mare	Medie/Mare	Mediu/Mare
4. English Country (Marea Britanie, Irlanda)	Redusă/Medie	Mare	Mare	Redusă/Medie
5. Est-european nr.1 (Germania de Est, Polonia, Cehia, Slovacia, Ungaria)	Redusă	Mare	Mare	Mare
3. Est-european nr.2 (Bulgaria, România)	Mare Foarte Mare	Redus Redus	Mediu Mediu	Mare Mare

- Adapted from N.A. Bibu (2000, p.14)

Eastern Group countries we divided in two subgroups I and II, in the likeness of them in terms of cultural dimensions.

1.4. Analysis and interpretation of variation recorded scores for cultural dimensions, in terms of managerial behavior

1. Analyzing the change scores recorded on groups of countries (see Table 2), we see that the distance from power - DP, the lowest values are recorded in the Nordic countries (Denmark-18, Suedia.-31) in countries German (Austria-11) and Ireland-28. Organisations from countries which have a short to power, employees prefer consultative leadership style, limited dependence of employees to their superiors, emotional distance between its relatively reduced.

The highest values were recorded in Slovakia-104 Romania-93, Eastern European countries, characterized by very large distance from power, dominated by authoritarian leadership style and emotional distance between employees and subordinates is high.

2. As the level of individualism, we see that the Nordic countries and the British Record scoruri. Variația largest index scores recorded for individualism in European countries is shown in Figure no. 1.

- Graph created using data provided by Geert Hofstede: Cultural Dimensions available on page-
http: / / www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php

In individualistic cultures employees act according to their own interests and work must be so organized that employee interests are not inferior to that of the employer. In these countries nepotism and conflict of interest is low because the employer committed on grounds of belonging to a particular interest group. Level of employee motivation is linked to performance that they get.

We can see that Eastern European countries, mainly former communist ones (Bulgaria-30, Romania, 30) recorded the lowest scores for individualism being primarily collectivist countries. In collectivist countries, relations between employees and employers have an emotional support, family relations are somewhat similar in involving reciprocal obligations of protection in exchange for loyalty. Level of employee motivation is not directly linked to individual performance. Sanctions for poor performance are to withdraw favors or loss of prestige gained in the organization.

3. Index values related to masculinity - MAS (see Figure no. 2), we see that the Germanic countries (Austria, 79, Germany-66) and some Eastern European countries (Slovakia-110-88 Hungary, Poland-64) with Italy - 79, recorded the highest scores.

- Graph created using data provided by Geert Hofstede: Cultural Dimensions available on page-
http: / / www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php

Typically masculine societies emphasize values that are related to material success and prosperity, specific mentality being to live to work. (Hofstede G., 1991, p.102, cited Marinas CV, 2010, p. 113). Authoritarian managers are focusing on performance and fairness among colleagues.

Countries that have low scores masculinity index, is the opposite type are companies with female culture. Among them the Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland) and the Netherlands. In these cultures prevailing concern for others perseverance and modesty, managers use intuition, seek success and pays special attention to the quality of working conditions and solidarity in order to obtain the best results at work. Reason women dominating type companies is to work to live. Work environment issues and organizational culture and motivation are major considerations is achieved by combining materials with the moral elements (O. Nicolescu, 2006, p. 52).

4. In terms of uncertainty avoidance dimension EI on organizational management plan insofar as it affects the organization tries to satisfy the need to structure its activities. This dimension indicates the extent to which members of society feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede G, 1991, p.135, cited Marinas CV 2010, p. 116.). Analysis of variance scores for this dimension (see Table 2.) We show that the highest values are recorded by the developed Latin countries (Belgium-94, France-86 Spain-86) and Eastern European countries (Poland, 93, Romania-90, Hungary-85) and lowest values (by an average group of countries) are registered by Nordic and English.

Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance are characterized by a large number of rules and procedures to be followed, management is oriented planning, organization and control, and the establishment of rules and regulations work. The focus on developing policies and strategies as well as rigorous schedule of tasks and objectives). Control function is exercised extensively, often with strong ties hierarchical management style is authoritarian. It places particular emphasis on punctuality and precision are essential values in these cultures, and time is money.

In countries with high uncertainty avoidance lower (eg Nordic countries), place less emphasis on planning, organization and control, employees are encouraged to accept ambiguity subtle (O. Nicolescu, 2006, p. 49). Uncertainty is seen as a normal part of life and stress level is quite low. In these countries there is an emotional rejection of the rules and employees are not even willing to work overtime if needed. Stimulates innovation and organizations are more tolerant of errors or abateri. Motivațiile individuals are emotional rather than material order.

Conclusions

Most European countries except the Nordic countries analyzed groups are predominantly male country focusing on the achievement of material on performance as a criterion for promotion and is characterized by low attachment to the organization. With regard to uncertainty avoidance, EU member states record high levels, except the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark) and English countries (Ireland, UK), where the degree of uncertainty avoidance is low and we see a lower level of stress and the manifestation of emotivității, considerable tolerance to errors or irregularities, and focus on avoiding conflict.

I also noticed that in the Nordic countries are characterized by femininity, power short distance and low uncertainty avoidance are advantaged management practices and policies concerned with ensuring employee well-being and quality of life, a close collaboration between the employee and manager - practicing the democratic and consultative management style. In terms of power distance dimension, the member countries except the Nordic countries and the English, there is high level, which tilts the balance toward authoritarian and centralized management systems with many hierarchical levels. However the general current trend is flattening the hierarchical ladder of management systems on the European continent.

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